

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR AMB. SIRACUSA - ARA/APU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, UY

SUBJECT: VIEWS ON OAS CHARTER REFORM

REF: STATE 268707

1. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CONVERSATION ON ANOTHER MATTER, I DISCUSSED REFTTEL WITH DR. ALVARO ALVAREZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY OF FOREIGN MINISTRY. STREESED I WAS BRINGING SUBJECT UP WITH HIM ON STRICTLY INFORMAL AND PERSONAL BASIS.

2. ALVAREZ COMMENTED THAT WITH CHARTER REFORM OR WITHOUT, OAS WILL NEVER BE ANYTHING BETTER THAN WHAT MEMBER STATES WANT IT TO BE. AFTER EXERCISE OF PAST TWO YEARS HE IS BASICALLY SATISFIED WITH RESULTS BUT FEELS THEY COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IN GIVING NEW DIRECTION AND ORIENTATION TO OAS WHICH WAS WHAT URUGUAY WANTED TO DO WHEN PROCESS BEGAN. HOWEVER, HE SAID, IN INITIAL STAGES, USDEL DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE CLEAR IDEA OF WHERE US WANTED TO GO AND PLAYED A GENERALLY PASSIVE ROLE. WITHOUT CLEAR AND FORCEFUL POLICY STATEMENTS FROM US, LA DELEGATIONS WERE LEFT A BIT IN THE AIR AND UNDERSTANDABLY MOVED TO CONCERTED ACTION ON ISSUES THEY BELIEVED TO BE OF IMPORTANCE TO THEM. DURING THIS PROCESS AND AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WE NOW HAVE SEVERAL ISSUES WHICH APPEAR TO BE UNACCEPTABLE TO US FOR REASONS HE, ALVAREZ, COULD UNDERSTAND, BUT
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DID NOT AGREE WITH.

3. ONE OF THESE IS COOPERATION FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT PERHAPS THIS COULD STILL BE WORKED OUT. OTHER MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE IS COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC SECURITY. ALVAREZ SAID HE WAS NOW FULLY IN FAVOR OF THIS CONCEPT. SAID US MUST UNDERSTAND URUGUAY'S POSITION THAT THIS IS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST US--ALTHOUGH ADMITTED SOME OTHER COUNTRIES MAY FEEL THIS IS CASE--BUT RATHER AGAINST ANYONE IN HEMISPHERE OR OUTSIDE HEMISPHERE WHO PRACTICES DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AGAINST URUGUAY OR ENGAGES IN ECONOMIC AGGRESSION. IN THIS CASE, ALVAREZ REFERRED TO CLOSURE OF EUROPEAN MARKET FOR URUGUAYAN BEEF. HE STRESSED, THEREFORE, THAT URUGUAY, BELIEVED THAT IT COULD EXPECT TO TURN TO OAS FOR HELP IN SUCH CASES.

4. ON CHARTER REFORM IN GENERAL AND OUR VIEW THAT IT FAILS TO EMBODY ANY PROFOUND OR CONSENSUAL VISION OF WHAT OAS IS AND SHOULD BE, ALVAREZ COMMENTED THAT THIS IS CERTAINLY THE CASE. BUT THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT CHARTER REFORM MEANT WHEN IT FIRST BEGAN AND WHERE IN HIS OPINION US PARTIALLY ABDICATED ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NOT COMING UP ITSELF WITH A CLEAR LINE FOR THE LATIN AMERICANS. HE SAID THE US STILL DOES NOT HAVE A COHERENT LATIN AMERICAN POLICY AND HE SEES LITTLE POINT IN FURTHER REFLECTION ON WHERE WE GO FROM HERE UNTIL SUCH A CLEAR POLICY LINE IS ENUNCIATED. I COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS A TWO-WAY STREET AND A GOAL THAT WE ALL SHARED. ALVAREZ SAID THIS WAS SO, BUT NEVERTHELESS THAT LATIN AMERICANS HAD AT LEAST MADE CLEAR WHAT THEY WANTED TO SEE IN TERMS OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE US. HE SAID HE WAS PERSONALLY DISTRESSED THAT US WAS NOW APPARENTLY WAKING UP TO ACTUAL SITUATION, BUT REACTING IN NEGATIVE MANNER BY SAYING SUCH AND SUCH IS NOT ACCEPTABLE WITHOUT OFFERING CLEAR ALTERNATIVES ON WHICH THE OTHERS COULD CONCENTRATE. HE WAS SORRY ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT AND STRESSED THE NEED FOR AN OAS INCLUDING THE US.

5. ALVAREZ DID NOT APPEAR TO BE HAPPY ABOUT ANY IDEA OF STARTING THE REFORM PROCESS AFRESH. HE REFERRED TO THE TIME AND MONEY ALREADY SPENT ON THE EFFORT AND REPEATED THE LINE THAT UNTIL THE US DECIDED WHERE IT WANTED TO GO, THERE WAS NO WAY THE OAS COULD DECIDE WHERE IT ITSELF WOULD GO. HE AGREED THAT THERE WERE MANY AREAS OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTER REQUIRING ATTENTION, BUT BELIEVED THAT FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO A CLEAR DEFINITION OF US VIEWS ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COHERENT POLICY TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA WHICH HE THOUGHT DID NOT NOW EXIST.

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6. ON THIS LATTER POINT, ALVAREZ DEVELOPED THE POINT OF VIEW HE HAS EXPRESSED IN PAST WHICH REPRESENTS HIS (AND GOU'S) BELIEF THAT IT IS NEGLECTED IN TERMS OF US-LA RELATIONS. HE DEPLORED WHAT HE CALLED THE TENDENCY OF THE US TO DEAL WITH A FEW COUNTRIES OR A FEW FOREIGN MINISTERS ON THE APPARENT POLICY BASIS THAT

THESE REPRESENTED OR COULD SPEAK FOR LATIN AMERICA AS A WHOLE. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, WAS US CONCERN WITH THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE IT HAD SPECIFIC PROBLEMS (PERU AND PANAMA). OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE OTHER HAND SEEMED TO BE IGNORED EVEN THOUGH THESE WERE THE VERY COUNTRIES WITH POLICIES MOST COMPATIBLE WITH THOSE OF THE US. ALVAREZ MADE CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT A QUOTE BILATERALIST UNQUOTE AS SUCH BUT FAVORED A MULTI-LATERAL APPROACH TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, RECOGNIZING THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE IMPORTANT. HE COMMENTED THAT IF THE US RETURNED TO A STRICTLY BILATERAL POLICY IN ITS DEALINGS WITH LATIN AMERICA, THEN COUNTRIES SUCH AS URUGUAY WOULD HAVE LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE US.

7. ON ANOTHER THEME, ALVAREZ POINTED TO THE SECRETARY'S REPORTED STATEMENT THAT THE US WOULD EXAMINE ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES THAT HAD VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE ANTI-ZIONISM RESOLUTION IN THE UN. URUGUAY SHARED THE US VIEW ON THIS ISSUE, BUT ALVAREZ WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE US MIGHT TAKE SOME FORM OF PUNITIVE ACTION IN THE ECONOMIC OR OTHER AREAS AGAINST COUNTRIES WHICH VOTED IN A MANNER CONTRARY TO US VIEWS. THIS, HE SAID, HE COULD NOT ACCEPT AS A PRINCIPLE AND TOUCHED DIRECTLY ON WHAT HE HAD SAID BEFORE ABOUT COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC SECURITY AND COOPERATION FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT.

8. FINALLY, ALVAREZ SAID URUGUAY WAS A SMALL COUNTRY AND ALWAYS HAD AND DID NOW BELIEVE FULLY IN THE OAS. IT WANTS THE GUARANTEES CONTAINED THEREIN EVEN THOUGH SOME OF THEM MAY BE NOTHING MORE THAN HOLLOW WORDS. IN SHORT, HE SAID, THE BALL IN CONNECTION WITH WHERE GOETH THE OAS RESTS IN THE US COURT.

9. CONVERSATION WAS CORDIAL AND FRANK WITH ALVAREZ WHO HAS STRONG VIEWS ON CERTAIN ISSUES BUT IS GOOD FRIEND OF US. DO NOT KNOW EXTENT TO WHICH FONMINISTER BLANCO WOULD SHARE ALVAREZ' VIEWS ON ALL ISSUES DISCUSSEYFQBBOVE, BUT ALVAREZ IS IN KEY POSITION IN CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTRY AND IS EXPERT ON OAS AFFAIRS. FOR THESE REASONS HIS PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS SHS SHOULD BE OF INTEREST.

10. ACTION REQUESTED. ALVAREZ TOLD ME HIS VIEWS WERE VERY PERSONAL IN NATURE. FOR THIS AND OTHER REASONS STRESS NECESSITY OF NOT LINKING HIM WITH THEM IN ANY DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON WITH BLANCO OR WITH MEMBERS URUGUAYAN OASDEL OR WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICANS. I CONSIDER OUR CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE BEEN PERSONAL AND PRIVATE AS DOES ALVAREZ.

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